

Dear Education Committee Members,

All of us who have made a career of advancing literacy for our students in our State of Michigan applaud your efforts to do the same. We are well aware that many instructional practices need to change; however this requires training our educators, not purchasing programs. We are very concerned by the HB5111 and HB5144. We have been down this program path before with the **No Child Left Behind** Legislation and the **Reading First** Programs that followed. Neither of them have had long term impact on improving early literacy.

We do know that improving independent reading starting with "Just Right" books at the students reading level and giving students class time to read does lead to reading improvement. In their 2012 article "Is the Library Important?" published by *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, Stephen Krashen, Syng Lee and Jeff McQuillan examine numerous studies that lead to the conclusion that the major problem many of our students face is access to quality books in both classrooms and libraries, let alone their homes. It is not the need for a program, but time to read and plentiful choices of books that will improve the reading abilities of our students. Do you know most schools have teachers begging for funds to purchase more books for their classrooms? The publishing world continues to bless us with wonderful books for all ages of our students. The younger the children, the more books the children need accessible and that is currently a funding issue.

Debbie Miller and Barbara Moss recently published a book No More Independent Reading Without Support. The introduction is written by our own University of Michigan Professor Nell Duke. The book outlines what educators need to stop doing and what they need to start doing with regard to independent reading instruction. If you would like to write legislation to support reading achievement, I strongly suggest you make this book your Education Committee December Book Club. It is a very quick read, just 70 pages. It has the research to support independent reading that reflects the NAEP data chart, see below, regarding the significance of Independent Reading.

Michigan's Educational Service Agencies/ISDs and RESDs are working collaboratively to support a Readers Workshop approach to reading by using the MAISA K-12 Reading and Writing Units and training teachers across the state. Teachers-Training-Teachers is our model and we are pleased to say we trained over 700 educators in the MAISA writing units last June 2013 and we will train in both MAISA writing and reading units June 2014. We need a few more years to have the data to back this approach of investing in our educators and purchasing classroom libraries of books rather than spending dollars on program as we have done in the past. We, like you, want to provide the reading achievement gains required to have students on track for college and career readiness.

I am including our flyer for this year's MAISA MiELANetwork Institute at the Lansing Center. We invite you to any and all of you to attend.

Please give your MAISA Community an opportunity to do this work.

Alicia Kubacki
General Education Director
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MAISA ELA Planning Committee

NAEP Data:

Students who rank:

98%ile, read on the average of	140 minutes per day.
90%ile, read on the average of	55 minutes per day.
80%ile, read about	40 minutes per day.
50%ile, read about	15 minutes per day.
30%ile, read about	6 minutes per day.

That transfers to approximately

10 million words read per year at the	98%ile
350,000 words per year at the	30%ile.